

Supplement to "STAMP COLLECTING," May 5th, 1934.



**Blazing
the
Air Mail
Trail**

PIONEER AIR POSTS OF THE EMPIRE

By A. T. WATERS



(PART I.)

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PREFACE.

In order to follow the story of the Empire's Air Mails it is as well to divide it into three parts:—

1. *Pioneer Days*.—Covering the years from 1902 to the outbreak of war.

2. *The Transition from War to Peace*.—This period covers the years 1919-1920. The war, while denying any possibility of commercial aviation, was responsible for improvements in both aeroplane design and aeroplane engines, which otherwise would not have materialised for years. Therefore, as soon as manufacture and operating companies turned their attention to civil aviation, results were obtained, such as a non-stop flight of nearly 2,000 miles across the Atlantic, a flight from England to Australia, &c., which staggered the world.

3. *Accomplishments 1920 Onwards*.—From the opening of the first London—Paris route in November, 1919, to the 12,000 miles of European and Imperial routes operated by our Imperial Airways.

Although not strictly English Air Mails, no excuse need be offered for including the Trans-Atlantic flights of 1919, as it was merely because of the better chance of a crossing that the flights were made west-east. The whole project was English.

Grateful acknowledgment is made of help received from the files of the *Evening Telegram* of St. John's, Newfoundland, and the *Daily Mail* of London. The files of other journals, when they might have a bearing on the subject, have likewise been consulted, as well as all published works.

This little book, telling of the rise of the Empire's Air Mails from early beginnings to the present day, is dedicated to the memory of the late Lord Northcliffe, who, by his whole-hearted belief and financial support, both before and after the Great War, did more than his share in advancing the cause of British Aviation.

EARLY BALLOON POSTS.

Long before the invention of the aeroplane experiments were carried out from time to time in different parts of England and elsewhere in dropping mails from free balloons. Owing to the uncertainty of control and direction, however, the value of the non-navigable gas-filled spheres was really negligible, and such attempts must therefore be regarded in the light of "stunts," more than anything else.

The earliest recorded British Balloon Post took place at the time of the celebrations of King Edward VII's Coronation, on August 9th, 1902, when three packets of souvenir post cards were dropped from a balloon sent up from Beckenham, Kent, in charge of the famous aeronaut, M. Gaudron. Each packet contained about 100 cards, which were dropped over Leeds Castle (Maidstone), Lenham, Kent, and St. Margaret's Bay (Dover) respectively. Strangely enough, but a single specimen of the first Beckenham balloon post card has come to light.

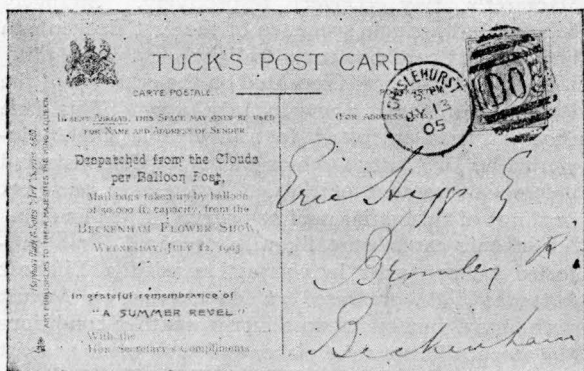
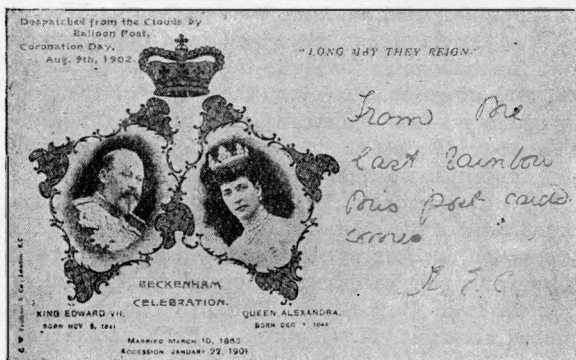
The experiment was repeated on the occasion of the Beckenham Flower Show in July, 1905. This time the mail was entrusted to a navigable airship invented by Dr. Barton, which was being demonstrated before Government officials. Again only one post card out of this aerial mail has survived to this day.

Souvenir cards were likewise prepared for a projected balloon post in connection with a Lifeboat Saturday Fête organised at Manchester on August 29th, 1903, but owing to adverse weather conditions the ascent did not take place, and such cards as exist are either unused or were posted in the ordinary course.

In October, 1907, some thousands of specially printed post cards were despatched by a balloon post organised by the *Daily Graphic* as a publicity "stunt." The balloon, in charge of Messrs. Gaudron and Tannar, went up from the grounds of the Crystal Palace on October 13th, and after drifting for some hours over the North Sea, eventually came down near

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RAREST BRITISH BALLOON POST CARDS.



Tosse (Sweden), where something like 15,000 post cards were posted. Nevertheless, *Daily Graphic* balloon post cards are by no means plentiful nowadays. So far as is known, this was the last of the British balloon post experiments, and the next stage in the progress of the flying post marked the advent of the heavier-than-air machine.

THE BLACKPOOL—SOUTHPORT
EXPERIMENT, 1910.

The first serious attempt to use the aeroplane as a medium for the transport of mails was made by that famous pioneer of aviation, Mr. Claude Grahame-White, during the course of an aviation meeting held at Blackpool in 1910. The idea originated in the mind of the Proprietor of the *Empire Illustrated*, a weekly journal—long since defunct—devoted to the cause of Tariff Reform. The mail, consisting of post cards advertising the journal, was to be carried from Blackpool to Southport by aeroplane, then posted in the ordinary way.

Unfortunately, owing to the rough weather, the start was not an unqualified success, as Mr. Grahame-White had to come to earth after covering some seven miles.

Nevertheless, the *Empire Illustrated* had the right idea, and as they saw to it that their call to the Faithful eventually, if somewhat tardily, reached its objective, no harm was done.

The following extract from the journal in question of August, 1910, proves that the enthusiastic Tariff Reformer was a surer prophet in matters aerial than in the political creed to which he fervently devoted his energies:—

“THE MAIL THAT FAILED—TEMPORARILY.”

“The first attempt at carrying the mails by aeroplane was inaugurated by the proprietor of this paper at the Blackpool meeting. Unfortunately, it must be categorised as a win for the existing form of conveyance, but for the time being only. Mr. Grahame-White, however, fully demonstrated the fact that mail carrying by aeroplane in the future is not a great stretch of imagination, as, notwithstanding a very high and boisterous wind, a mail bag, containing letters addressed to Tariff Reformers all over the country, was carried for a distance of over seven miles at Blackpool. To have attempted to carry

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out the experiment in its entirety would have been foolhardy under the conditions experienced. Taking into account that the roofs of the hangars were stripped from end to end by the wind, it could hardly be expected that the first aerial mail could be successful, and it must be remembered that even to-day the telegraph and telephone systems break down, and one often hears of the ordinary mails being delayed.

"If it had not been for the adverse weather conditions, almost unprecedented at this time of year for so continuous a period, the experiment would have demonstrated in an extremely interesting way some highly convincing data.

"It was estimated that the mailbag would have been delivered from Blackpool Post Office to Southport Post Office in about 35 minutes, whereas the ordinary letter takes 5 hours. The intention also was to despatch to Mr. H. Harper, the *Daily Mail* correspondent, who volunteered to undertake the necessary duties at the Southport end, two identical messages, the contents of which were unknown to him.

"It was intended to send one by Mr. Grahame-White and the other by telegram immediately he left the grounds. There is not much doubt that the aeroplane message could have reached Mr. Harper before the telegram.

"By inaugurating the first aerial mail we had no idea in our own minds of proving that mail carrying by aeroplane was a practical proposition at the present time, but rather to draw the attention of the various departments of the Government, Military, Naval, and Postal, to the progress in aviation by the experiment, which would have shown what the aeroplane is capable of even in its admittedly elementary stages.

"However, the elements were against a successful conclusion, and the comprehensive data therefore not forthcoming, but we still have the fact that in



A SCARCE BLACKPOOL—SOUTHPORT AIR POST CARD,
1910.

a very high wind a mailbag weighing considerably over a hundredweight was carried for a considerable distance. In these circumstances we have decided to despatch the post cards, &c., contained in the mail bag of the first aerial mail as we think they will be of considerable interest.

"Mr. Grahame-White's flight, shortly after the flight with the mail bag mentioned above, *clearly proves that the time is not far distant when the aeroplane will face any weather and a mail bag may be delivered with certainty.*"

FIRST U.K. AERIAL POST, 1911.

This was the first and last mail-carrying experiment until over a year afterwards, when a Capt. Windham, who had organised an aerial post at Allahabad in February, 1911, in connection with the United Provinces Exhibition, came over and secured the collaboration of the Postmaster-General in running an air post between London and Windsor.

The air post was supposed to be part of the Coronation celebrations, although it was rather late in the day. Again Mr. Claude Grahame-White was commissioned to operate the service. As this service had the sanction of the Postmaster-General, it

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was termed official, but in kindly permitting this infringement of his monopoly he was very careful to point out, and every piece of mail was inscribed to that effect, that he undertook no responsibility whatsoever.

The service was well organised, and cards and envelopes, printed with a special design, were placed on sale at most of the leading stores in London, as well as at the London Aerodrome (Hendon). The cards were sold (ready stamped) at 6½d., and the envelopes, including a sheet of note-paper, at 1s. 1d. The idea caught on, and several hundred thousand cards and envelopes had been sold by September 9th when the first flight took place.

The pilots engaged in the service were Gustav Hamel, and Messrs. Driver, Hubert, and Greswell, members of the Grahame-White Aviation School.

Only one bag of mail, carried by Hamel, was carried on the first day, although a large proportion of the total mail was postmarked September 9th. Hubert crashed on the second day, and was rather severely hurt. This caused a slight contretemps, as Hamel refused to carry on until the organisers agreed to make an award to the injured pilot. Eventually it was agreed that £500 should be set aside out of the available funds as an award to Hubert, and the carrying continued. The service was discontinued on September 17th with the carrying of a single mail from Windsor to Hendon. Although the service was in every way an unqualified success, it was not without its critics. The *Manchester Guardian* poured scorn upon the whole thing, referring to it as "A good game for the silly season." Others inferred that the pilots would be better engaged doing cross country flying than in operating this service, which could be of no possible value. Actually, of course, it was exceedingly helpful in the work of making the people, in general, air minded, and the late Lord Northcliffe was not



CARD CARRIED ON THE FIRST OFFICIAL AIR POST
AT ALLAHABAD (INDIA) IN FEBRUARY, 1911.



SOUVENIR CARD OF THE LONDON—WINDSOR
EXPERIMENTAL AIR POST SERVICE, SEPTEMBER,
1911.

slow to seize upon the idea when he launched his great campaign in the year following.

The extract from an article in the *Daily Mail* on the day following the first carriage of mail seems somewhat naive when read to-day:—

“Some day, many years hence, when letters are regularly carried by aeroplane, there will probably be people alive who will be able to say: ‘I saw the first air postman flying from London to Windsor with the first bag of letters entrusted by the Post Office to an airman, September 9th, 1911.’ ”

Only eight years afterwards, in 1919, a regular daily official air mail service was in operation between London and the Continent.

THE *DAILY MAIL* AEROPLANE AND WATERPLANE TOUR OF GREAT BRITAIN, 1912.

On May 13th, 1912, Lord Northcliffe, who had already expended enormous sums of money in furthering the cause of aviation, including the following:—£1,000 for the first cross-Channel flight, £10,000 for a London—Manchester flight, £10,000 for circuit of Great Britain, announced, through his paper, that M. Salmét had been engaged to make a 13 weeks’ tour of England and Wales, flying from place to place and giving demonstrations.

The object of the tour was to convince the people of England (few of whom, up to now, had even seen an aeroplane) of the high degree of reliability they had already reached and the value of the services they could perform in war. To quote the *Daily Mail*: “It is now clear to all that in warfare on the sea, as well as in warfare on land, the aeroplane is henceforth not only a valuable but an indispensable arm, and possibly the arm which will decide the destiny of nations by deciding the results of campaigns.”

M. Salmét (who had just flown from Hendon to Issy-les-Moulineaux, on the outskirts of Paris, in

3 hours 12 minutes—a record) began his tour in the West Country, starting a triumphant procession by way of Reading, Bristol, Newport, Cardiff, Wells, Taunton, &c. Mayors and aldermen turned out to meet him, the local papers expended columns before, during, and after his stay, upon every incident of his flights. So popular was the tour that, on June 21st, the *Daily Mail* announced that they would supplement the Salmesbury tour with a series of waterplane demonstrations by arrangement with Mr. Claude Grahame-White, and on the 22nd they announced that they had arranged with Mr. W. H. Ewen to make a tour of the Northern Counties similar to that of M. Salmesbury's. A few days later, June 27th, Frank Huck's Waterplane Co. were engaged to make a 10 weeks' waterplane tour along the South-West Coast, the North-West Coast, and then over England to the North-East Coast. By the first week in July the *Daily Mail* had the following pilots engaged in their mission of making the general public air-minded—M. Fischer (on the South Coast), W. H. Ewen (in the Midlands), Lt. Parke, R.A. (Manchester and District), B. C. Hucks (in Midlands), M. Salmesbury (West Counties), and C. Grahame-White booked to begin his waterplane tour at Brighton on July 23rd.

On July 10th Gustav Hamel was added to the corps, and was booked to begin his tour at Hull with his 50 h.p. Bleriot monoplane on July 13th.

In the meantime the Grahame-White School were holding aviation meetings at various points. In connection with one of these, at Bath, Hucks flew from Hendon to Cambe Down on May 21st, bearing a message of good will from the Lord Mayor of London to the Mayor of Bath. An aerial post was also arranged to be carried by Hucks on his return journey, and posted at Hendon. According to the *Bath Herald* of Tuesday, May 28th, about six hundred post cards were so carried. Mr. A. E. Hopkins, in his interesting little book on this flight,

illustrates one of the cards. On each card was fixed a small label, reading "This card was carried from Bath to the London Aerodrome by aeroplane, 24 May, 1912," with a space for the aviator's initials. Other cards had labels affixed, which read "This card will be carried by aeroplane in the cross-country handicap at the London Aerodrome, Hendon, on Whit Monday (weather permitting), and posted in Hendon." As Hucks flew in the handicap it is presumed that he carried these cards also to Hendon, and then carried the whole mail with him on the handicap before posting in the ordinary way.

The above series of flights provide for the Air Post collector, perhaps, the most interesting material available so far as the Air Post History of Great Britain is concerned, and yet the information given by catalogues and other works of reference is woefully meagre, and often actually misleading.

Perhaps I have my share of blame to shoulder for this state of affairs, but I am now going to make amends. Not only have I gone through the files of the *Daily Mail*, and checked up their schedules of flights, but I have verified these schedules from the files of local papers of the period. The time tables were always prefaced with "weather and other conditions permitting," and often enough they didn't. Therefore a pilot wasn't always where he was supposed to be. It may be imagined that the examination of all these files, the writing to all the local journals, &c., has meant no little work, but I can vouch for the accuracy of my information.

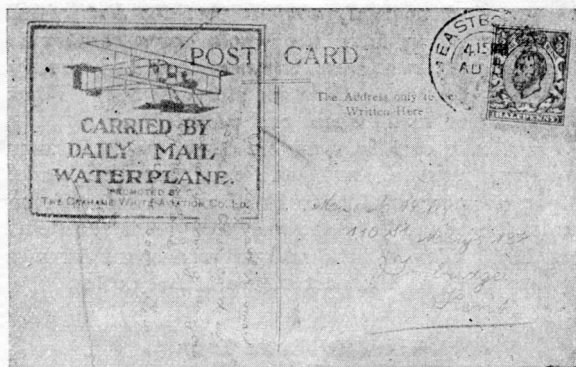
THE AIR MAILS.

Extract from the *Daily Mail*, July 23rd, 1912.

"WATERPLANE POST."

SERIES OF SOUTH COAST POSTAL DEPOTS.

An interesting feature of the Grahame-White Waterplane Tour on the South Coast will be the institution of a *Daily Mail* Aerial Post. Post cards



POST CARD CARRIED BY *Daily Mail* AIRMEN IN 1912.

for transmission by this post may be obtained at the *Daily Mail* Waterplane Postal Depots named below. Senders should write the name and address.

Then follows a list of depots at Brighton, Eastbourne, Newhaven, and Seaford.

On July 31st the following notice appeared:—

On July 23rd it was announced that post cards would be carried by the corps of airmen who are giving flying exhibitions throughout the country for the *Daily Mail*. This was done under a misapprehension, as such conveyance of correspondence would infringe the rights of the Postmaster-General, who has the exclusive privilege of carrying all letters. The Aerial Service proposal is therefore dropped.

M. Fischer (on the South-West Coast). Mr. W. H. Ewen (in the Midlands), Lt. Parke, R.A. (at Manchester and District), B. C. Hucks (in Midlands), M. Salmel (in the West Country), and Mr. Grahame-White booked to begin his waterplane tour at Brighton on July 23rd.

The two announcements must be read carefully. On the 23rd it would appear that only the C. Grahame-White waterplanes would carry mail. From the wording of the notice, dropping the project on

the 31st, it is perfectly obvious that the *Daily Mail* had intended to have the whole corps of airmen carrying mail, and, what is more, they had already started operations. How far did they go? What pilots carried mail, when, and where?

I will take each in turn, and then we shall know exactly where we stand with any particular cards.

For the purpose I have in mind, *i.e.*, identifying cards, the period July 23rd to July 31st is sufficient, but I will allow a little margin to account for any leg weariness on the part of the actual poster.

GRAHAME-WHITE TOUR.

Pilots: C. Grahame-White, J. L. Travers,
M. Pauhlan (occasionally).

July 23rd.—At Brighton.

July 24th.—At Brighton.

July 25th.—At Brighton.

July 26th.—At Brighton, with trip to Newhaven.

July 27th.—At Brighton.

July 28th.—At Brighton (Sunday).

July 29th.—No flying. Stormy weather.

July 30th.—No flying. Stormy weather.

July 31st.—No flying. Stormy weather.

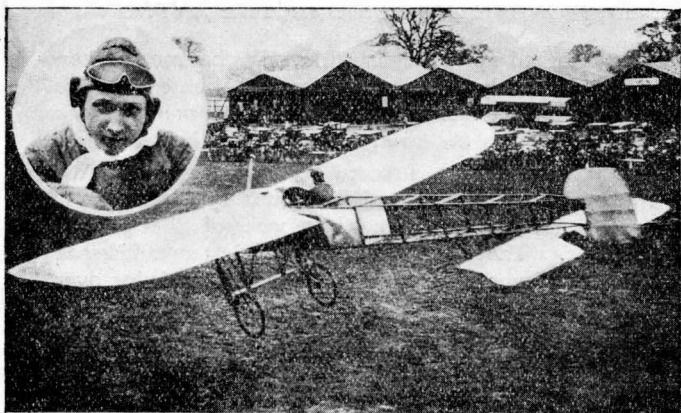
August 1st.—No flying. Stormy weather.

August 2nd and 3rd.—At Eastbourne.

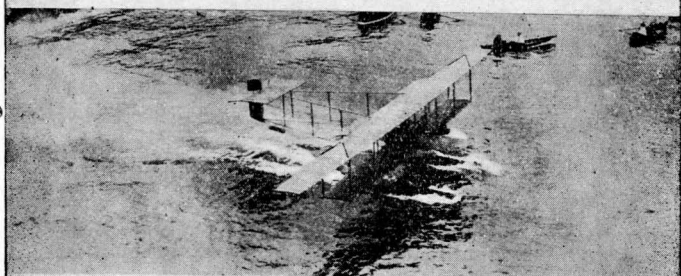
August 4th.—At Cowes.

On the 26th it was said (in the *Daily Mail*) that the Aerial Post was a great success, that many hundreds of cards had been purchased, and that *next week they would be carried in bulk from Brighton to Eastbourne.*

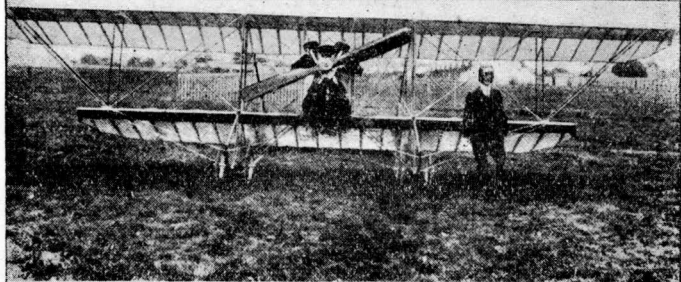
What cards ought we to expect? Cards sold at Seaford and Newhaven, postmarked up to the 31st July. (By the way, the rare "black cachet" emanated from Newhaven.) But the cards sold at Newhaven and Seaford must have been very few in number. It is quite possible that cards may be



DAILY MAIL AEROPLANE CIRCUIT, 1912.
MR. G. RAMPTON AND HIS 50 H.P. HERCULES



DAILY MAIL - WATERPLANE CIRCUIT, 1912.
70 H.P. HENRY FARMAN WATERPLANE



"Daily Mail" Aeroplane Circuit, 1912.
W. H. Ewen and his 60-H.P. Caudron Bi-plane.

postmarked up to August 3rd at Eastbourne, as they would already have been accepted, but *only cards postmarked either Brighton or Eastbourne can have been flown to the point indicated by the postmark.*

SALMET.—There is record of a mail carried by this pilot between Bath and Falmouth in June, but it does not come within the scope of the present article. The same pilot dropped letters addressed to the Mayor of Monmouth while he was flying over the town on the 19th July.

I can find no trace of any mail carried during the period under review, but in case anything should turn up in the future I give his itinerary:—

July 21st to 23rd.—Worcester and Stratford-on-Avon.

July 24th.—Gloucester.

July 26th.—Malvern.

July 27th.—Stroud and Swindon.

July 29th.—Northampton.

August 3rd and 4th.—Southend-on-Sea.

M. FISCHER AND M. HUBERT WATERPLANE
TOUR.

A mail exists here. Excessively rare cards, flown from Weymouth to Exmouth, are postmarked Exmouth, July 26th—the correct date.

ITINERARY.

Weymouth.—July 22nd, 23rd, 24th, and 25th.

Exmouth.—July 26th, 27th, 28th, and 29th.

Seaton.—July 30th.

Teignmouth.—July 31st and August 1st.

Torquay.—August 3rd, 5th, and 6th.

It is therefore possible for cards to exist postmarked at Seaton or Teignmouth. The cachet is similar to the Grahame-White one, but is without "Promoted by the Grahame-White Aviation Co., Ltd."

B. C. HUCKS.—A mail was carried between Loughborough—Coventry, via Leicester, July 27th

to July 29th. Although I have not actually handled a specimen, the cachet is similar to the Hamel, the name B. C. Hucks replacing Gustav Hamel.

ITINERARY.

July 20th.—Nottingham.
July 21st.—Nottingham (Sunday).
July 22nd and 23rd.—Birmingham.
July 24th.—Birmingham to Loughborough.
July 25th and 26th.—Loughborough.
July 27th.—Loughborough to Leicester and
Coventry.
July 27th to August 1st.—Coventry.
August 2nd.—Lincoln.

On July 28th the *Daily Mail* announced that Hucks had carried a mail bag from Loughborough and Leicester to Coventry. I also have verifications of this from other sources. It is fairly certain from the itinerary and the Press notices that Hucks did not carry another mail.

HAMEL.—

ITINERARY.

July 16th and 17th.—Hull and Grimsby.
No flying until 24th.
July 24th.—Middlesbrough, Stockton, and
Redcar.
July 25th. — Durham County Show
Grounds—Stockton.
July 26th.—Redcar and Thornaby and on to
Sunderland.

Hamel made a forced landing in fog outside Sunderland, slightly damaging machine.

July 31st.—Newcastle.
August 3rd to 10th.—Isle of Man.

The only cards I have seen postmarked in England are Redcar, Stockton, or Middlesbrough, between the dates July 26th to July 29th. It is possible, however, that cards may exist postmarked Sunder-

land. It is very improbable that any were carried as, owing to his forced landing, the pilot only flew over Sunderland.

Once in the Isle of Man, however, the Postmaster-General could go hang, and mail was carried from Douglas to Ramsey, Peel, and Port Erin, and *vice versa*, with letters from Mayors, Chairmen of Commissioners, &c. Hamel was greeted with the greatest enthusiasm in contrast with the lukewarm reception accorded him at some of the northern towns.

I give an extract from the *Ramsey Courier* of Friday, August 9th. It makes amusing reading nowadays, especially considering the flight took about 10 minutes.

RAMSEY COURIER, FRIDAY, AUGUST 9th.

MR. HAMEL AT RAMSEY.

LONGEST CROSS-COUNTRY FLIGHTS.

THRILLING, ENTHUSIASTIC SCENES.

If other parts of the island were hypnotised, on Thursday Ramsey was staggered, amazed, thrilled, spellbound. It is an easy matter to exaggerate, but Mr. Hamel's intrepid flight from Douglas and subsequent demonstration cannot be exaggerated. It was brilliant, bold, and stunning, the longest cross-country flight. The aviator was over 6,000 ft. or thereabouts sky high, soaring gracefully as a swallow. Again Mr. Gustav Hamel, the *Daily Mail's* daring and plucky young airman, enshrined himself with renewed honour and glory. Ten thousand human beings craned their necks and stretched their eyes towards the vault of heaven, and ten thousand full-throated voices rent the air. Mr. Hamel was the hero of the hour, and will be for many a long day lionised, almost hugged and worshipped, besieged, and implored for his precious signature. If people were aviation crazy before, now they are completely

absorbed and obsessed. Everyone is talking eloquently and glibly of graceful curves, beautiful spirals, magnificent vol-planes, and mysterious banking. But to our mutton, as the Frenchman would say, though Mr. Hamel is not of that nationality, his able mechanic is. There were many who shook their heads dubiously, and said that Ramsey would not see the famous flyer, but it did. All things come to them that wait. Mr. Hamel came and saw and conquered. He did more, for most people suddenly became mesmerised. The event was a novel experience, a thing of a lifetime, something to be remembered and talked about, for few of the multitude who gazed on Mr. Hamel on Thursday had ever seen an aeroplane before. It was as well, perhaps, that the visit was postponed until the show day, as visitors and residents turned up from all points of the insular compass, and thought themselves amply rewarded, for it was truly an awesome and wonderful spectacle.

Mr. Moysey read out the letter sent to him with the first aerial post from the Mayor of Douglas.

Peel City Guardian, August 10th, 1912.

He carried a letter from the Mayor of Douglas (Wm. Joughin) to Mr. T. W. Kermode, J.P., Chairman of the Peel Commissioners, as follows:—

DEAR MR. KERMODE,—This is probably the first letter that has been conveyed by air in the Isle of Man.

I beg to send hearty greetings to the people of Peel on the first aerial flight from Douglas to Peel, and to wish you and the people of Peel a prosperous season. The residents of the Isle of Man and the visitors to our shores greatly appreciate the enterprise of the *Daily Mail* in organising these flights, and giving us the opportunity of witnessing these mar-

vellous displays. You will also, I am sure, join me in congratulations to Mr. Hamel on the skill and courage displayed by him as a pioneer of aerial navigation.

We sincerely trust he may have a successful and safe journey, and that the result of his graceful exhibition may advance the science and practice of aviation.—I am, &c. ———.

On his return to Douglas the same day he took the following letter:—

Peel, August 6th.

DEAR MR. MAYOR,—Thanks for your letter and your wishes. I return them many times. Mr. Hamel's wonderful flight from Douglas to Peel will long be remembered by the people of the Western City.—Yours truly,

T. W. KERMODE.

FIRST AERIAL POST TO PEEL.

Hamel, August 7th, flew to Port Erin. Following letter taken:—

Town Hall, Douglas, August 7th.

DEAR MR. CAIN,—I beg to send hearty greetings to the people of Port Erin on the first aerial flight from Douglas to Port Erin, and to wish you all a very prosperous season. We all join in congratulation to Mr. Hamel on the skill and courage displayed by him in his aerial flights, and we are also deeply indebted to the proprietors of the *Daily Mail* for their enterprise in the matter.—With all good wishes, I am, yours sincerely,

WM. JOUGHIN.

Mr. P. Cain,

Chairman, Port Erin Commissioners.

I give the context of three of the inaugural letters:

I also have first-hand evidence of the selling of the cards on the flying fields at the four towns.

With Mr. W. H. Ewen we are not concerned. He

was not flying during the important period, but his cards were sold together with those of Hamel and Hucks.

I think I have proved that the various mails could only exist between July 23rd and August 31st (with the exception of the Isle of Man), and I hope that the lists I have given will help collectors to identify their pieces.

During the whole of 1913 and 1914 little effort was made by the Government to develop the aeroplane and the Air Force, as far as the Army and Navy were concerned, was "nobody's darling." The *Daily Mail* was still hammering away, however, and on April 1st, 1913, they offered, as an incentive to designers and manufacturers, the two following prizes:—

£5,000 for a circuit of Great Britain by waterplane.

£10,000 for an Atlantic flight by waterplane.

The conditions of the latter offer were as follows:—
"We offer £10,000 to the first person who crosses the Atlantic from any point in the United States, Canada, or Newfoundland, to any point in Great Britain or Ireland in seventy-two consecutive hours. The flight may be made, of course, either way across the Atlantic. This prize is open to pilots of any nationality and machines of foreign as well as British construction."

Needless to say, this offer made people rub their eyes. Fly the Atlantic! Absurd! Yet the Comte de Lambert, the great French sportsman and inventor of the hydroplane, when asked: "How long do you think it will be before the Atlantic from the United States to England is crossed in an aeroplane?" replied: "I think it will be done before ten years have passed and, not only so, but I think it will be done between sunrise and sunset."

22 PIONEER AIR POSTS OF THE EMPIRE.

By the very next morning four entries had been received :—

Mr. Gordon (England).

Herr Rumpler.

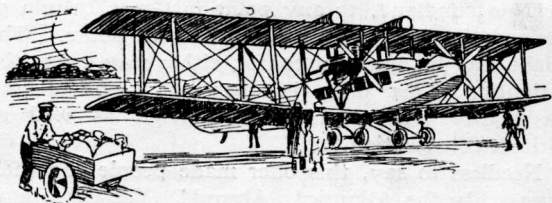
Messrs. Bleriot, Ltd.

Colonel Cody.

However doubtful the Press of the world might be of such a flight eventuating, they had seen every *Daily Mail* aviation prize won, and this extract from the *Pall Mall Gazette* of April 2nd shows the cautious attitude adopted :—"The history of former *Daily Mail* prizes has shown that the proprietors have had a better informed understanding of the possibilities of aviation than the general public, and the present occasion will be no exception."

1914-1918.

All civil aviation is stopped.



(The author will be glad to receive any corrections or additions to the foregoing for purposes of record.)

KEEP UP WITH AIR MAIL MATTERS

BY READING

Stamp 3d. Collecting

THE JOURNAL OF MODERN PHILATELY

THE PAPER THAT HELPS
YOU WITH YOUR HOBBY

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